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MINEHEAD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S
REPORT FOR 1959**

The Registrar General's figure for the population of the town is 7,460 ; the figure for 1958 and 1957 being 7,450. It is probable that during the summer holidays this figure is more than doubled. The seasonal increase usually commences in June and continues until September. There are also minor variations at Easter and Christmas. The large majority of the hotels, boarding houses and apartments close down for the winter months.

WATER SUPPLY

The water supply of Minehead was achieved after a somewhat stormy birth. It has been proved to be one of the most valuable assets of the town and its population. It is entirely adequate in quantity and is now of excellent quality. The accompanying table of the examination of specimens taken from widely different parts of the supply demonstrates its excellence bacteriologically and chemically. In fact, the water supply justifies the expenditure that its purchase entailed.

The supply acquired by the purchase of the water undertaking owned by Mr. Luttrell has been included in the Minehead water supply, alterations and improvements, together with the chlorination plant, having been completed.

The discolouration of the water noticed at certain times was the subject of further complaints. At the request of the Ministry further investigations were carried out and the discolouration was found to be, as on previous occasions, innocuous and not in any way injurious to health.

RAW WATER				TREATED AFTER GOING INTO SUPPLY			
BACTERIOLOGICAL		CHEMICAL		BACTERIOLOGICAL		CHEMICAL	
Satis- factory	Unsatis- factory	Satis- factory	Unsatis- factory	Satis- factory	Unsatis- factory	Satis - factory	Unsatis- factory
34	27	6	—	21	5	—	—

The water is supplied to the public direct from the mains, either direct to the houses or by means of standpipes. It will be seen from the accompanying table the manner of its distribution.

			DIRECT TO THE HOUSES			BY MEANS OF STANDPIPES		
			Public	Water Companies	Private	Public	Water Companies	Private
Number of Houses	Dwelling ...	...	2,592	—	8	10	—	—
Population	...	...	7,395	—	28	37	—	—

SWIMMING POOLS

There is one Swimming Pool situated on the sea front, which is privately owned. This pool is filled with sea water which undergoes chlorination before being admitted to the pool. The filtration and chlorination plant are under skilled management, and the engineer is on duty the whole of the time the bath is in operation. Frequent testing indicated that the water carried the necessary amount of residual chlorine to ensure a safe bathing water. Samples submitted from time to time were all found to be satisfactory.

The efficiency of the management of the Swimming Pool and the condition of the bathing water have at no time given rise to any anxiety.

M. D. W.

Minchard

195

145

Miss Clark

Water & Sewerage Div.

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W/H 4 L S.

19 JAN 1962

9 FEB 1962



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SEWERAGE

• In my last report I dealt with this matter at some length hoping that some definite decision would have been reached before the end of 1959. Much discussion has taken place, but I am not able to report that any decision has been arrived at.

The scheme put forward by your Consulting Engineers, which had been approved, was subsequently rescinded in October, 1958, in order that alternatives might be discussed still further. These alternatives were still under discussion at the close of my report dealing with 1958, but their objective was different. It now aims only at the abatement of the flood water nuisance in the low-lying eastern area of the town and the question of beach pollution is not considered.

That you have expended much time and thought in this direction is evidenced by the fact that your Surveyor has prepared on your directions three separate plans involving much skilled work, time and money on their preparation.

The abatement of the storm flooding with sewage-fouled water will be a great relief to the whole population and to those occupying the lower portion of the town it will mean the removal of an ever threatening menace, but the pleasure of meeting crude sewage instead of ozone when bathing in the open sea will perhaps mitigate the transports of those living on the higher levels.

Doubtless other problems such as finance bulk largely in the difficulties to be surmounted, but it is to be remembered that a health resort for visitors and residents, old and young, will depend for its prosperity on the excellence of those services that minister to its health—water, drainage, cleanliness and open spaces. It is right and proper that discussion and time should be devoted to this matter of drainage, but it must also be remembered that the prosperity of Minehead, the lives and health of its inhabitants, depend on the result of your deliberations. Let it not be written as the result of another year's work—*Vox et praeterea nihil*.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

Meat is prepared for human food at the Minehead Abattoir, from where it is distributed throughout the districts of Minehead, Watchet, and Williton. So far as is practical, all animals are inspected before slaughter and all carcasses and offal are inspected in accordance with instructions laid down in Memo. 62 Foods, and appropriate action taken where required.

All places where food is prepared, &c., including the Abattoir, shops, stalls and vehicles, are inspected from time to time and action taken as required. Generally the cleanliness of these establishments and vehicles is satisfactory.

A list of premises used in this context in alphabetical order follows:—

Bakehouses	...	...	...	2	Dairy Shops	...	...	...	3
Bakers' Shops	...	...	...	4	Fishmongers	...	...	...	4
Butchers	...	...	...	8	Fried Fish Shops	...	...	...	2
Cafés	...	...	...	19	Fruiterers and Greengrocers	...	...	...	9
Chemists	...	...	...	5	Grocers	...	...	...	31
Clubs, &c.	...	...	...	12	Hostels	...	...	...	1
Canteens	...	...	...	2	Hotels with Restaurants	...	...	...	11
Church Halls	...	...	...	6	Hotels, Residential	...	...	...	43
Confectioners	...	...	...	8	Licensed Premises	...	...	...	9
Dairies	...	...	...	1	Pie Factory	...	...	...	1

The number of inspections given to these premises was 640 during the year.

The care, cleanliness and compliance with the Food Hygiene Regulations of these premises was found to be satisfactory.

No prosecutions were made during the year.

The method of disposal of such food as is condemned is by burying. No large quantities of food were dealt with.

MEAT INSPECTION, 1959

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part during year :—

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known) ...	449	97	99	3,929	1,181
Number inspected ...	449	97	99	3,929	1,181
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci :</i>					
Whole carcases condemned ...	—	2	—	2	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	16	18	—	64	22
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci ...	3.5	20.6	—	1.7	1.9
<i>Tuberculosis only :</i>					
Whole carcases condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	5	2	—	—	22
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with tuber- culosis ...	1.1	2	—	—	1.9
<i>Cysticercosis :</i>					
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treat- ment by refrigeration ...	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally con- demned ...	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Weight of meat condemned (in lbs.) for :</i> ...	ALL ANIMALS				
(a) Tuberculosis ...	366				
(b) Cysticercosis ...	—				
(c) Other ...	1,808				
Total (in lbs.) condemned ...	2,174				

MILK

The milk supply during the year was satisfactorily maintained. Samples taken from time to time that did not come up to the required standard were investigated and the cause ascertained and remedied.

- (a) The total number of Registered Distributors was ... 5
- (b) The total number of Registered Dairy Premises (other than Dairy Farms) was ... 1
- (c) Number of Licensed Dealers of Designated Milk... 5
- (d) Number of supplementary licences issued to distributors whose dairy is outside this
area ... 1

MANUFACTURE OF ICE CREAM

The regulations governing this manufacture and the requirements implicit in them have tended to restrict the preparation of ice cream to the large wholesale houses. The distributors find it more profitable to purchase their ice cream in bulk.

The number of Premises registered for :—

Manufacture and Retail ...	8 (two only manufacturing)
Manufacture only ...	0
Retail only ...	44

HOUSING

The total number of houses is 2,610. During the year 17 houses were erected by private enterprise. There were no houses erected by the Local Authority. Fourteen houses were in course of erection by private enterprise at the close of the year.

The total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year was approximately 113.

There was no case of overcrowding.

Number of Post-War Houses erected from 1st April, 1945, to 31st December, 1959		Housing Programme for 1960	
By Local Authority	By Private Enterprise	For slum clearance	For other purposes
226	170	Nil	Nil

No. of permanent dwellings in District as at 31/12/58 (a)	Gained from conversions and erected during 1959 (L.A. and P.E.) (b)	Total (a) + (b)	Less houses demolished closed, &c., during year	No. of permanent dwellings in District as at 31/12/59	
				L.A.	P.E.
L.A. 347 P.E. 2,246	— 18	347 2,264	Nil	347	2,264

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Number of applications and houses dealt with by Local Authority during year :

Received		Approved	
Applications	No. of Dwellings	Applications	No. of Dwellings
4	5	4	5

Number of applications approved in respect of owner-occupiers during the year was three.

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 TO 1959

PART 1 OF THE ACT

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspector).

	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	11	14	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	55	65	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
	66	79	—	—

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found :—

	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation	—	—	—	—	—

Number of cases in which defects were found :

Particulars	Found	Remedied	Referred		Number of Cases in which prosecutions were instituted
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Convenience :					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	1	1	—	1	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	1	1	—	1	—

PART VIII OF THE ACT

Outwork

Nature of work		No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel	Making, &c.	3	—	—	—	—	—
	Cleaning and Washing	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL ...		3	—	—	—	—	—

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Infectious diseases this year have been more numerous, but in none of the notifiable diseases has the use of the word epidemic been warranted.

The number of notifiable diseases for the year was 59, compared with 15 for 1958. Most of the cases were of a mild type and there were no deaths associated with them.

TUBERCULOSIS

There were five cases of Tuberculosis notified, and two deaths.

HOSPITAL

The Minehead and West Somerset Hospital is entirely administered by the Bridgwater, Minehead and Butleigh Management Committee.

Local representation in the management of the Hospital exists in the House Committee of the Hospital, on which the town is represented. This Committee is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the Institution and is empowered to make recommendations and representations to the Committee of Management. The Committee of Management is represented on the Committee by three of its members.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Transport Service for Minehead and District is carried out by the St. John Ambulance Brigade from the Minehead St. John Ambulance Brigade Headquarters under Station Officer E. S. Lamb. Three ambulances and two sitting case cars are based on the Headquarters. The Station Officer has six full-time ambulance drivers under his supervision. Night work and week-end duties are undertaken with the assistance of the voluntary drivers. The Minehead Nursing Division supplies the Nursing personnel for all journeys in which a nurse is required.

To demonstrate the work performed from the Minehead Headquarters and its personnel, I have appended the following figures :—

Miles travelled ...	...	...	80,445
Journeys performed ...	...	...	2,886
Patients conveyed ...	...	...	8,705
Accidents ...	...	...	75

CLINICS

Clinics, with the exception of Infant Welfare, are now held at the Minehead and West Somerset Hospital.

VITAL STATISTICS

	Total	M.	F.
Live Births—Legitimate ...	83	45	38
Illegitimate ...	4	3	1
Live birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ...			11.66.
Stillbirths—Legitimate, 1 Male.			
Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births ...			11.36.
Deaths of Infants under one years of age ...			1 (five hours).
Death Rate of Infants per 1,000 live births ...			11.5.
Percentage of Illegitimate live births ...			4.6.
Perinatal Mortality Rate (still births plus deaths during the first week) per 1,000 total live and still births ...			22.7.

Deaths Total M. F.
122 40 82

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ... 16.35.

An analysis of the vital statistics shows that the total deaths registered were 122 ; in 1958 the figure was 121.

The total of live births was 87 compared with 75 the previous year.

With regard to the deaths occurring in age groups, 18 occurred between 60 and 70 ; 90 occurred over the age of 70, and of these 42 occurred between 70 and 80 ; 42 between 80 and 90, and 7 at 90 or over. It would seem that of the 122 deaths only 31 failed to reach the three score years and ten.

Consideration of the causes of deaths shows that 61 deaths resulted from diseases of the circulatory system ; the figure for the previous year being 60.

Of these 61 deaths, lesions of the coronary vessels of the heart number 12, and vascular lesions of the nervous system 18. There were four deaths due to respiratory disease. The total number of deaths from malignant disease was 25 compared with 30 the previous year.

I will terminate the report with a short summary under the different headings dealt with.

Water. Satisfactory in quantity and quality.

Sewerage. The difficulties in dealing with sewage and surface water disposal inherent in a growing town on the terrain on which Minehead has been, and is being built, have not yet been solved.

Refuse. Collection and disposal is at present satisfactory.

Foods. The preparation of foods and their handling and transport are under constant observation by your Public Health Inspector. The premises and vehicles devoted to this work are also his particular care. No adverse reports have been received from him.

The retail display of food is rapidly improving to meet the universal demand in this direction.

Housing. In the report this is a matter of figures which show that the demand still exceeds the supply.

Factories. The attached report of your Public Health Inspector is satisfactory.

Infectious diseases were more numerous, but of a mild type, and at no time gave rise to anxiety.

Of the various services combining to implement the care of the sick and injured there is nothing but praise to express. Where all are so good it were folly to particularise.

Vital Statistics. Of the spate of percentages with which I have wearied you in my report I would say that they are not the product of a nightmare or my own too vivid imagination.

The last three paragraphs are matters of interest, but of themselves cannot be taken as indicative of any particular change in the trend of disease.

My last word is one of commendation to all those who contribute at whatever level in maintaining the cleanliness of the town, the delightful flowered open spaces and walks, and the happy effect of the general cottage architecture and bright gardens. Minehead needs no welcoming board.

In preparing this report I point out that the substance of it depends not only on my own observations and reports from various sources, but on the help of personal contact with my colleagues, Mr. Holman, your very able and distinguished Surveyor, and Mr. Symes, your Public Health Inspector, who, though so little in the public eye, achieves so much without ruffling the public calm. I am indeed fortunate in this respect.

To the Clerk of the Council I tender my appreciation of his help and courtesy. Being a very busy man, he can always find time as long as it is not wasted, and to the Chairman and Council, who suffer me from time to time, my grateful thanks for their forbearance.

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June, 1960.